

'It Is A Challenge Which Can Be Met'

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Mathias Says Fort Detrick Faces Rough Sledding From Politicians

WASHINGTON (Special)--Sen. Charles Mac Mathias said on Thursday he foresees a period of rough sledding from politicians for biological research being conducted at Fort Detrick.

A great share of national political attention has been focused recently on the aspects of biological and chemical warfare, especially on research and development of offensive weapons.

The senator, who observed his birthday the day of the interview, said that in the past operations at Fort Detrick have

been justified on scientific and military reasons.

"Now," he added, "Detrick will also have to be supported on political grounds."

"This will prove to be a challenge, but it is a challenge which can be met on the basis that Detrick is one of the great medical research centers."

The political discussion will lead to promotion of the argument of the medical research being done at Detrick, a positive aspect of the research facility located in Frederick which is often overlooked.

Charges as to questionable op-

erations at Fort Detrick were first aired about two months ago by Congressman McCarthy of New York, on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The testing of nerve gas at Edgewood was recently a subject of questioning by Congressman Long of Maryland, in whose district that military facility lies.

Sen. Mathias pointed out that protesting of activities at Fort Detrick was started a decade ago by the Quakers, who maintained a vigil at the fort's main gate. With an open discussion on Detrick and biological warfare in the Congress, he predicted that

millions of persons throughout the nation would be concerned.

"Now the justification for Fort Detrick must be not only on the military and scientific, but also on political grounds," the senator added.

In answer to a question on the future of space research, Sen. Mathias said that the program would definitely continue but at a much lower cost.

"We already have constructed nine of the rockets like Apollo 11 which took our astronauts to the moon," he said, and predicted a much less costly program.